

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th January, 2012

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
Aldermen Browne, M. Campbell and Newton;
Councillors Attwood, Convery, Garrett, Haire,
Hanna, Hendron, Jones, Lavery, Maskey, McKee,
McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir, A. Newton
and Reynolds.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;
Mr. C. Quigley, Assistant Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Finance/Value-for-Money

Investment Programme 2012/15 – Revised Draft

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 This report presents the proposed final draft of the Investment Programme 2012-15, a copy of which has been circulated.

1.2 The programme is the culmination of a process, driven by Party Group Leaders and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to create a package of measures to help address the impact of the economic down-turn in Belfast. It sets out the Council’s commitment to deliver for the city over the rest of this Council-term and beyond. It is a document that is about investment, but it is also an ambitious, can-do, proactive agenda for partnership across Belfast to grow the local economy, support businesses, help people into employment and provide the economic infrastructure necessary for future competitiveness.

- 1.3 The programme is timely, as recent press coverage of the prevalence of the level of youth unemployment, child poverty and the impact of the downturn on construction, retail and other sectors has shown. Nationally and locally organisations and bodies such as the CBI have been calling for ways to maximise the impact of capital expenditure, boost employment opportunities and address youth unemployment.
- 1.4 The Committee last discussed the investment programme at its meeting on 9 December 2011 and comments and amendments made by Members at that meeting have now been included in the revised version. This report outlines the content of the programme, how Members' comments have been addressed and plans for the launch of the document, public consultation and feedback.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Content of the Draft Investment Programme

The Investment Programme sets out the Council's commitments for 2012-15, including:

- Physical investment programme - £150million in capital projects including £75million in council facilities; £20million in partnership projects aimed at leveraging over £50million from Europe and other sources to provide key economic infrastructure and £5million in a local investment fund which will lever, attract and complement other funding streams such as the Social Investment Fund, Neighbourhood Renewal and Sport NI's Community Capital fund;
- Economy – investing £34million in supporting local economic growth through tourism, events, arts and culture and key sectors such as retail, creative industries, financial and business sectors, connected health and marketing Belfast internationally. The Council is also committing to deliver 600 job, work placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities and increasing its local procurement from 50% to 60% by 2015;

- **People and communities** – investing £29million in community development; good relations, - including a programme of work at interfaces; community safety, tackling health inequalities and implementing the Council's Poverty and Social Inequalities Framework. It also commits to engaging local communities in the redevelopment of open spaces, parks, playgrounds and other community assets and rolling out environmental improvements;
- **Value for Money** – keeping any required rate increase below inflation, delivering £20million in efficiency savings by 2015, paying 90% of creditors within 28 days, introducing social and community benefit clauses in our contracts and working to sustain and enhance the value of the city's rate-base to ensure future investment.

2.3 At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 9 December 2011, Members made a number of comments about the previous draft of the investment programme and these have been addressed as follows:

- ***'style and the content of the document needs to connect to local communities'*** – the document now contains images from across the city and the section on people, communities and neighbourhoods has been enhanced;
- ***'the package needs to tackle any inequalities and should consider concessionary charges for use of the Council's leisure centres'*** – reference to promoting free access to leisure centres for those people in the most deprived areas has been included (page 33);
- ***'more emphasis on procurement and supporting the local economy'*** – further detail is now added at page 29;
- ***'consideration should be given to the launch of the document coinciding with any announcement of the business case for the extension of the Waterfront Hall'*** – this has been taken on board in the arrangements for the launch of the document;

- *'consideration should be given to holding two major investment conferences outside Northern Ireland'* – this is now included within the document (page 29);
- *'the package needs to highlight the additionality the Council was trying to achieve, beyond the normal day to day operational work'* – additionality has been highlighted in the introduction;
- *'the programme needs to balance ambition with what could be delivered'* – an implementation plan will be created to ensure that the programme is delivered;
- *'the programme should set out the longer-term ambitions for the City – over a fifteen to twenty year period'* – the programme signposts the Council's masterplan document which will contain a longer term vision for the development of the city.

2.4 Outstanding Section

Members will note that some pages have been left blank at the back of the document. Before publication information will be added to these outlining:

- Arrangements for monitoring and review of the programme;
- Information about Council departments;
- Consultation questions and a glossary of terms and references.

3 Launch and Consultation

- 3.1 Following direction from Members, the document will be launched at the Waterfront Hall on 2 February 2012 following the rates decision, which will be taken by Council on the previous evening. This will be a breakfast event lasting approximately an hour and a half. The high profile event will have approximately 200 invited attendees including Councillors and key decision makers from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, Belfast-based MLAs and the media. It is proposed that the First and Deputy First Ministers are also invited. The session will be led by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Party Leaders with support from officers as appropriate. There will be an embargoed media briefing on 1 February.

- 3.2 Members have also asked that community-based events are held to broaden communication about the programme and ensure that local people have access to the Council's plans. It is proposed that 5 community events are held across the city in either Council or other local venues; venues and times are being finalised and Members will be advised of these at the Committee meeting. It is proposed that these also are led by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Party Leaders supported by appropriate officers.
- 3.3 A launch will also be held for Council staff and the Trade Unions who will be consulted on the document and will be key partners in its implementation.
- 3.4 In line with the Council's best value and equality duties and so that implementation of the document can be informed by the views of partners and citizens, a period of further communication and consultation will follow the launch of the document. The document will be made available on-line and at Council locations and a summary version will be produced and incorporated into the Spring edition of City Matters which will go to every household in Belfast. Consultation questions will be added to the document together with a number of mechanisms by which people can give feedback. Corporate Communications will work to ensure that the key messages agreed by Members are communicated effectively across the city.
- 3.5 As Members are aware work has been ongoing to refresh the Belfast Masterplan which will give a wider physical development context to the investment programme, this work will be signposted at the launch to ensure that a longer-term view of city development is given. A special meeting of the Development Committee on the Masterplan, to which all Council Members are invited, has been arranged for 26 January 2012.

3.6 Pre-consultation

At the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 9 December 2011, it was suggested that private sector representatives be consulted on the content of the plan before its launch to garner their feedback. Consequently, the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Chair of the Development Committee and the nominees of the deputy chairs of both Committees met with members of the Business Alliance on 10 January 2012. The Business Alliance group included representatives of the CBI, IOD, Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade and Commerce and the Centre of Competitiveness. At this meeting the Business Alliance were supportive of the Council's approach, highlighting the need to focus on growing exports, supporting businesses on the arterial routes as well as the city centre and maximising the benefit of capital investment. There was also support for the value for money commitments contained in the programme.

4 Resources Implications

- 4.1 The resources implications of the investment programme are contained within the rates report which is the next item on the Committee's agenda.
- 4.2 There will be costs associated with the launch of the document and its production but these can be covered from within existing budgets.

5 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 5.1 Equality screening of all elements of the investment programme will be undertaken in line with Council policy as well as a screening and assessment of the overall programme at a strategic level. This information will be made available as part of the consultation on the document. On-going assessment will be informed by consultation feedback, including a specific session with the Council's established Section 75 Consultative Forum.
- 5.2 Good Relations and equality are among the fundamental principles of the programme, underlining the Council's commitment to delivering on these vital outcomes for Belfast across all projects and actions.
- 5.3 We will remain alert to emerging opportunities to promote equality and good relations and regularly monitor our performance in relation to equality and good relations and review progress.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to:

- **Approve the investment programme at Appendix 1; and**
- **Agree the proposals for launch and communication of the programme;**
- **Note that the next stage of the process will be a paper on the measures required to ensure effective implementation of the programme.”**

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed:

- (i) that the First Minister and Deputy First Minister would be invited to speak at the launch on 2nd February and that the Social Development and the Environment Ministers would be invited to attend the launch;
- (ii) that, in order to broaden communication about the programme and ensure that people had access to the Council's plans, community-based events be held at the following venues:
 - North Belfast – Grove Wellbeing Centre and the Crumlin Road Gaol
 - South Belfast – Olympia Leisure Centre
 - East Belfast – Belmont Tower
 - West Belfast – An Culturlann
 - Shankill – Argyle Centre
- (iii) to the amendment of the wording in relation to Emerging Partnership Projects to reflect that the Investment Programme was an evolving document and that other projects could be added to the proposals;
- (iv) to the amendment of the Emerging Partnership Projects in so far as it related to the North Belfast Cultural Corridor to include a reference to an adjacent project to regenerate St. Kevin's Hall;
- (v) to the issuing of an Editorial Press Release, to be agreed by the Party Leaders, in support of the Programme;
- (vi) that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 3rd February take the form of a workshop in order to look at the Governance and implementation of the various projects;

- (vii) inclusion at the back of the document of arrangements for monitoring and review of the programme and information about Members of Council and Council departments;
- (viii) that briefings should be held for staff and Trade Unions on the programme; and
- (ix) with respect to employment opportunities reference should also be made to the promotion of volunteering.

Financial Estimates and District Rate 2012/13

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will recall that the following process has been followed for setting the district rate and agreeing the estimates for 2012/13.

Apr	Budget Panel and SP&R	Indicative rate, efficiency target and overview of efficiency programme
Jun	Budget Panel and SP&R	Year End Report Agree Efficiency Programme
Aug	Budget Panel and SP&R	Issue guidance on estimates and medium term financial plan to Departments Q1 Finance Report
Sep- Oct	Budget Panel and SP&R	Update on Rates Position Update on Medium Term Financial Plan Capital Investment Programme
Nov	SP&R	Further update on rate to highlight key issues & scenario analysis Q2 Financial Report
Dec	Budget Panel and SP&R	Discuss and finalise option for rates position taking into account Medium Term Financial Plan, capital financing strategy and treasury management strategy
Jan	SP&R Department Committees SP&R	Recommendation to Council on district rate and medium term financial plan
Feb	Council	Agree district rate Q3 Finance Report

- 1.2 So far the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has agreed the following in relation to the revenue estimates and district rate 2012/13:
1. The cash limit and the revenue estimates for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
 2. The cash limits for the Health and Environmental Services, Parks and Leisure, Development and Town Planning Committees.
 3. A stepped increase of £1m for the waste plan.
 4. The general reserves will not be enhanced through the district rate in 2012/13.
 5. The Estimated Penny Product for 2011/12 should also be used for 2012/13.
- 1.3 The departments' revenue estimates have all now been agreed by the relevant Standing Committees based on the cash limits agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
- 1.4 The impact of these decisions means an overall increase in the estimates of £287k or 0.22% on the district rate is required.
- 1.5 In order to finalise the district rate for 2012/13 Members also need to agree on the financing of their capital investment decisions as detailed in the Investment Programme 2012-15.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Capital Investment

The capital investment detailed in the Investment Programme 2012-15 is as follows:

- £75m in council facilities
- £20m in partnership projects
- £50m levered from sources outside of the council
- £5m in smaller regeneration projects.

- 2.2 This programme of physical investment will be financed and delivered through the following:
- Capital Programme – used to pay for enhancements or new assets owned by the council and paid for through a mixture of loans, grants, capital receipts and one-off payments.

- **City Investment Fund** – used to finance investment package schemes for non-council assets and paid for through cash generated from the rates or capital receipts. Currently, £3m from rates go into the fund every year. By 2014/15 there will be £11m in the fund net of current commitments.
- **Local Investment Fund** – used to fund neighbourhood capital projects for non-council assets. There is currently £2.5m in the fund.

2.3 The £75m investment in council facilities will be delivered through the capital programme. This programme can be financed through one-off cash payments, loans, receipts from the sales of assets and grants from other bodies. The capital budget already provides for £10.14m of capital financing and it is recommended that this budget is sufficient to cover the proposed capital programme commitments. The Prudential Indicators, which are the subject of a separate report on the agenda, demonstrate that the proposed level of capital financing is prudent, affordable and sustainable. This means that there is no requirement to increase the district rate to support the capital programme.

2.4 The £20m investment in partnership projects and the associated £50m leverage financing from other sources will be delivered through the City Investment Fund. This fund provides financial support to projects where the asset will not be owned by the council. It is currently financed through an annual £3m contribution from the rate and from capital receipts. The forecast for the fund is that by 2014/15 £11m would be available for financing partnership projects. This means there is a shortfall of £9m. Based on discussions at the Budget and Transformation Panel on 11 January, it is recommended that this shortfall is met through a one-off increase in the district rate of 2.38%. This means that the annual rate contribution to the city investment fund would be £6m. Financing the fund in this way avoids spikes in the district rate and provides for sustainable investment over the longer term.

- 2.5 The £5m investment in smaller projects will be financed through the Local Investment Fund. This fund currently has a balance of £2.5m. The fund has been created through the re-alignment of budgets and is not supported by the district rate. Members will recall that at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18 November it was reported that there could be an opportunity to increase the fund to £5m over the next two years. Members are aware that waste management costs are due to increase by some £3.7m in 2014/15 when the arc21 Residual Waste Contract commences. The council has been planning for this increase in costs through a gradual increase in the rate in order to avoid a spike in the rate in 2014/15 and a further stepped increase of £1m has already been agreed for 2012/13. The money generated through the gradual increase in the rate is placed in a waste fund which is used to finance on a non-recurrent basis the implementation of waste management improvements. However, for 2012/13 and 2013/14, £1.25m is available to be allocated to other funds. It is therefore recommended that £1.25m is allocated to the Local Investment Fund from the Waste Fund in 2012/13 and 2013/14 which will make available a total of £5m available to the fund.

Summary of District Rate 2012/13

- 2.6 In summary, the overall impact of the recommendations is as follows:
- 0.22% district rate increase to support the running costs of the council,
 - 2.38% district rate increase to support the Investment Programme 2012-15.
- 2.7 This means the overall rate increase for 2012-13 is recommended to be 2.6%. Based on an EPP of £4,800,110 the domestic rate is recommended to be 0.3094p and the non-domestic rate to be 27.0237p.

Impact on the Ratepayer

- 2.7 Table 1 below summarises the impact of the 2.6% district rate increase on the ratepayer. From the table it can be seen that the average domestic rates bill will increase by 35 pence a week. For retail property the average rates bill will increase by £2.68 and for office property the increase is £3.33.

2.8 Table One: Impact on Ratepayer of 2.6% district rate increase (includes regional rate increase of 2.2%)

PROPERTY	Rates Bill 2011/12	Rates Bill 2012/13	Increase in Rate Bill	Increase in Rate Bill
			Annual	Weekly
<i>Domestic Properties</i>	£	£	£	£
Terrace House	581.81	595.62	13.81	0.27
3-Bed Semi-Detached House	889.79	910.90	21.11	0.41
4-Bed Detached House	1,978.15	2,025.09	46.94	0.90
Apartment	561.31	574.63	13.32	0.26
Average Capital Value	774.18	792.55	18.37	0.35
<i>Non-Domestic Properties</i>				
Office Property	7,271.51	7,444.88	173.37	3.33
Retail Property	5,854.11	5,993.69	139.58	2.68

2.9 Members should note that the Chairs of the Strategic Policy and Resources and Development Committees and the Vice-Chair nominees met with members of the Business Alliance including representatives of the CBI, IOD, Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade and Commerce and the Centre of Competitiveness. The representatives of the business community expressed their support for an investment programme funded by a modest rate rise where operating costs were maintained at zero and money was used for capital and for creating job opportunities, particularly for the young.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree:

- (a) To maintain the current capital financing budget at its current level of £10,145,676;
- (b) To increase the district rate by 2.38% in relation to the financing of the City Investment Fund;
- (c) To increase the district rate, in total, by 2.6% for 2012/13 based on the Estimated Penny Product of £4,800,110 which means that the domestic rate for 2012/13 is recommended to be 0.3094p and the non-domestic rate to be 27.0237p; and

- (d) To allocate £1.25m in 2012/13 and 2013/14 from the Waste Fund to the Local Investment Fund.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and

Resolved – That the Council be recommended to approve the expenditure contained within the departmental estimates and, further to this, that the following District Rate be fixed to meet the estimated expenditure of the several Committees of the Council for the financial year commencing 1st April, 2012:

Non-Domestic Rate – 27.0237 pence
Domestic Rate – 0.3094 pence

**Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy –
Prudential Code and Treasury Management Indicators**

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.
- 1.2 This report provides information for Members on the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 and the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13. Members should note that the work carried out to develop these indicators has been validated by CIPFA.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

- 2.2 At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by mid-year and year end treasury management reports.
- 2.3 The prudential indicators for the Council are included as Appendix A to this report, while the treasury management strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix B. The indicators include the capital expenditure impact of the Investment Strategy being considered by members at this meeting as part of the district rate report.
- 2.4 The comparison of 'Net Borrowing' to 'Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)', is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated net borrowing should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated net borrowing position, a copy of which has been circulated, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance and Resources therefore considers the estimated levels of net borrowing as being prudent.
- 2.5 Table 4 and 5 (Appendix A) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium term financial plan, and the incremental impact on the rates of the Investment Programme. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent 6.21% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable and sustainable.
- 2.6 The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines this affordable limit as the 'Authorised Borrowing Limit' and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 6 (Appendix A) sets out the recommended 'Authorised Borrowing Limit' for the Council as being £106m.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices to the report.

Members are also asked to agree:-

- The Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £106m
- The Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

ICT Update Report

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted the undernoted report:

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on a number of ICT improvement and VFM projects.

2 **Key Issues**

Mobile Phones

- 2.1 Currently Belfast City Council has 2 mobile telephone suppliers. In order to select one corporate supplier for mobile phones a mini competition was held within the OGC (Office of Government Commerce) framework. A specification and costing model based on one month of typical mobile phone usage was developed and sent to the 4 suppliers on the OGC list. All 4 suppliers were then given an opportunity to personally present and discuss the merits of their submissions. The 4 suppliers were BT, Vodafone, Orange and O2.
- 2.2 As a result of a detailed evaluation Vodafone is the recommended supplier. If agreed the new contract will offer a fixed rate line rental that also covers all voice and text usage. This means there will be no charges for phone calls and text messages as long as usage remains within 15% of current volumes.
- 2.3 The move to the new contract will begin in February, current Vodafone users (90%) will be automatically transferred to the new contract. The remaining mobile phone users will be assisted by ISB with the transfer process. This will involve replacing the current mobile phone Sim card and transferring the user's number.
- 2.4 There will be an estimated £30,000 reduction in overall mobile phone costs.

Landline Telephony

- 2.5 The Council's land line telecoms services are currently provided by three suppliers, BT, Virgin Media and Cable & Wireless. Virgin Media provide telephony services to the City Hall and Cecil Ward Building, Cable & Wireless provide a small proportion of services at ISB and BT is responsible for the remaining telephony services.
- 2.6 As part of the Council's agreed efficiency programme, telecoms experts Entel have carried out an analysis of telecommunications services provided to the council, with a view to identifying cost reduction opportunities. They have recommended that the Council should move to one single supplier with savings being in excess of £31,000 a year. The movement of telephony services to one supplier will not require changes to telecoms infrastructure.
- 2.7 It is recommended that the Council procures a single telephony supplier. Entel have agreed to assist with the procurement exercise and the implementation of the new telephony contract. Payment for this work will be dependent on the level of cash savings achieved and will be compliant with the Council's procurement rules.

Public Wireless Access – City Hall

- 2.8 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed at its meeting on 23 September 2011 that a feasibility study on providing wireless public access in the City Hall and its grounds could be carried out. British Telecom was commissioned to carry out the study. The work has revealed that it would cost £30,000 to install a public wireless network covering the ground floor, the Banqueting Hall, Great Hall, Reception Hall, Council Chambers and the lawn at the front of the City Hall. The cost of the installation would be covered as part of the 2011/12 budget.

Audit Management System

- 2.9 A key strand of the governance framework of the Council is the work delivered by the Audit, Governance and Risk service. Currently, Health and Safety Inspections, risk registers and audit recommendations are all managed through a manual system. There is an urgent need to automate these key governance processes in order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. A business case has been presented to the Corporate Governance Team and Members are requested to agree to the Director of Finance & Resources proceeding to tender for the supply of an automated audit management system. The agreement will be for a period of 3 years, with the option to extend for a further 2 years. It is estimated that the cost will be in the region of £50,000 which will be financed through a revenue contribution within the existing capital budget.

Super-connected cities project

- 2.10 Fourteen cities across the UK have the chance to become super-connected cities. In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor George Osborne announced that up to 10 cities would share £100m and become super-connected with 80-100Mbps broadband access.
- 2.11 The four capitals – London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast – will benefit while the others will be chosen through a competition.
- 2.12 On the 20th December details of those eligible to apply was published along with guidance for bidders.
- 2.13 As part of their proposal to access money from the £100m urban broadband fund, each city will have to bid.
- 2.14 The bidding cities will have to show how they will use super-connected status to drive growth with a particular focus on SMEs and strategic employment zones. Proposals will also need to include plans for city-wide high-speed mobile connectivity.
- 2.15 The first stage of the bidding process is to submit a high level proposal by 13 February 2012. The successful cities will be announced in the Budget in March. The Government will then work with the successful cities to produce fully developed plans and the money allocated to each city will be announced in July.

- 2.16 Following discussion with DETI and Invest NI the bid for Belfast will be led by Belfast City Council. It is recommended that the Council prepares a high level proposal in line with the Investment Programme 2012-15 and because of the tight timeframes authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to prepare the initial high level proposal. If the initial bid is successful then Members, through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, will have the opportunity to shape the detailed plans which must be submitted by the June 2012.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree:

- (a) To the awarding of the Council's mobile phone contract to Vodafone;
- (b) To procure a single landline telephony supplier;
- (c) To submit an initial high level bid in line with the Council's Investment Programme to the Urban Broadband Fund; and
- (d) To seek tenders for an audit management system using pre-determined evaluation criteria including quality and cost. In addition, Committee approval is sought under the Scheme of Delegation for acceptance of successful tenders to be delegated to the Director of Finance & Resources.

- 3.2 Members are also requested to advise as to whether officers should proceed with the delivery of a public wireless network in the City Hall as outlined in paragraph 2.8 above."

In response to a Member's question regarding the availability of the new mobile telephone contract to Elected Members, the Chief Executive stated that the new contract would be applicable to Councillors and that the overall estimated cost saving would permit those Members currently on other contracts to be compensated for any cancellation charges accruing to them for moving to the Council contract.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Minutes of Meeting of Audit Panel

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Panel of 13th December.

Minutes of Meeting of Budget and Transformation Panel

The Committee adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel of 11th January.

Tender for a Print Contract - City Matters

(Mr. E. Deeny, Head of Corporate Communications, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee granted authority for the commencement of a tendering exercise and delegated authority to the Assistant Chief Executive, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, to accept the most advantageous tender received in respect of the printing of the City Matters magazine for a three-year period and in accordance with the agreed award criteria.

Democratic Services and Governance

Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

The Committee considered the undernoted requests which had been received for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality:

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Law Society of Northern Ireland	The Law Society of Northern Ireland Council Dinner 28th September, 2012 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to provide an opportunity for representatives from the judiciary, business, voluntary and community sectors to come together to acknowledge the achievements of the Society. The event aims to highlight best practice and to develop relations with key stakeholders. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Theme of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Belfast City Marathon Limited	<p>Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon Expo and Pack Collection</p> <p>1st – 5th May, 2013</p> <p>Approximately 30,000 over 4 days</p>	The use of the City Hall	<p>The provision of the City Hall will enable participants to come to a central point to collect their marathon packs and view the exhibitions on display.</p> <p>This will showcase the City Hall to the 30,000 + individuals and in particular international entrants and will also be of benefit to the city's economy.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together'.</p>	The use of the City Hall
Belfast Healthy Cities	<p>Shaping Child Friendly Environments</p> <p>28th February, 2012</p> <p>Approximately 100 attending</p>	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits.	<p>This event will highlight the need for shaping healthier neighbourhoods for children and will give children the opportunity to put forward their ideas. It will also showcase the project which addresses inequalities and added value of partnership working and community engagement.</p> <p>Belfast City Council has been a partner of Belfast Healthy Cities since its inception in 1988.</p> <p>This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together', 'Better opportunities for success across the City', 'Better care for Belfast's environment' and 'Better support for people and communities'.</p>	<p>The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits.</p> <p>Approximate cost £250</p>

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
The National Deaf Children's Society	Young Authors and Artists Prize Day 2012 23rd May, 2012 Approximately 130 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	This event aims to celebrate the artistic achievements of deaf children and young people across Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the awards seek to improve the confidence and self- esteem of participants. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'Better opportunities for success across the City', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £325
Plumbing and Mechanical Services Training (Northern Ireland) Limited	Apprenticeship Achievers Awards Ceremony 19th June, 2012 Approximately 300 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to recognise the achievement of those individuals who have successfully completed an apprenticeship programme. This event provides an opportunity for the Council to show its support to an industry which is suffering due to the economic downturn whilst demonstrating support for the development of our city's young people. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better opportunities for success across the City' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Cinemagic Limited	Cinemagic Awards 2012 23rd November, 2012 Approximately 500 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to acknowledge those young people who have demonstrated the most promising and creative talent in the field of Film and Television. Designed for and by young people, Cinemagic caters for local people with a range of film and cultural interests. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City Leadership – Strong, Fair, Together, 'Better opportunities for success across the city' and 'Better Support for People and Communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of wine and soft drinks Approximate cost £500
Mountpottinger Methodist Church	125th Anniversary of Mountpottinger Methodist Church 30th November, 2012 Approximately 200 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception	This event seeks to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Mountpottinger Methodist Church and to acknowledge its contribution to the general life and well-being of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together' and 'Better support for people and communities'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a pre-dinner drinks reception. Approximate cost £500

Organisation/ Body	Event/Date - Number of Delegates/Guests	Request	Comments	Recommendation
Embrace NI	Launch of 'A Word of Welcome' Poster 24th February, 2012 Approximately 30 attending	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits	The event will launch a 'Welcome Poster' and accompanying Guide Book which will display the languages representing the diversity of languages spoken by residents of the city. This event would contribute to the Council's Key Themes of 'City leadership, strong, fair and together', 'Better opportunities for success across the City', 'Better support for people and communities' and 'Better services – listening and delivering'.	The use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits Approximate cost £75

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Use of the City Hall and Civic Hospitality for the World Police and Fire Games 2013

The Committee was reminded that in August, 2013, Belfast would be the host City for the World Police and Fire Games. The Games were the third largest multi-sport event in the world behind the Olympics and the World Masters Games.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the World Police and Fire Games Directors organised and funded a 'Host Appreciation Dinner' as a 'thank you' to the host city, their officials and Games organisers. The dinner was normally held in a prestigious venue which reflected the culture and history of the host City. In addition to the host City representatives, the Games Federation also invited the organising committees from future host cities - Fairfax, Virginia in 2015, Montreal 2017 and the successful bidding city for 2019, the appointment of which would take place during the Belfast games.

He explained that it had been apparent that a lot of hard work had gone into securing and planning the delivery of the games, not least by the original Board which saw the potential for Belfast and was instrumental in defining the bid which resulted in Belfast being chosen as the host City for the 2013 games. The Board included representatives from the Council, the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Prison Service.

Accordingly it was recommended that the Committee:

- (i) grant the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in the form of a wine and soft drinks reception up to a value of £500, in accordance with Council policy, for the host appreciation dinner event which would take place during the games in August, 2013; and
- (ii) in order to acknowledge the important role which had been played by Members of the initial Board which had been responsible for the submission of the bid, agree to host a lunch in the City Hall, which would be for approximately twenty people and include the Lord Mayor, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee and Members of the original Board of the World Police and Fire Games, the cost of which would be approximately £600.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Best Practice Visits

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Alderman Newton raised the issue of best practice visits to community development initiatives in Unionist areas of the City and requested that the Committee consider undertaking a number of site visits to the following locations:

“East Belfast

Pottinger DEA

- **East Belfast Alternatives – Andy Moorehead - formed in 1998, the aim of the project is to reduce the number of ‘punishment beatings’ carried out against young people by both loyalist and republican paramilitaries.**
- **East Belfast Community Development Association – Michael Briggs – the membership is drawn from community groups representing a population of 109,000. Its role is to add value to the activities undertaken by groups in local areas and to work with key organisations to ensure the continued development of a community sector in East Belfast that is recognised, valued and effective.**
- **Willowfield Parish Church – Canon David Mclay – the aim is to be a church in the community, for the community; in the city, for the city (see attached information).**
- **Walkway Community Centre**

Victoria DEA

- Connswater Community Greenway
- Wandsworth Community Centre (see attached information)
- Victoria PACT (see attached information)
- East Belfast Partnership

North Belfast

- Crusaders Football Club
- Good Morning Ballysillan

Oldpark DEA

- Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre – Jimm Potts – the Centre ran on a voluntary basis for 10 years operating out of portacabins before finally getting new purpose-built accommodation
- North Belfast Alternatives – Joan Totten – engages with restorative justice programmes in the area.

South Belfast

- Sandy Row Development Association
- GVRT Ballynafeigh CDA

Shankill

- Shankill Women's Centre – formed in 1987 as a locally based group to provide education for women. Since that time it has flourished and developed to its current position as a key provider for training, health awareness, childcare and young women's activities in the Greater Shankill and beyond.
- Spectrum Centre – is a major landmark in the Shankill area. It has developed as an Arts and Culture venue which lies at the heart of the community."

The Committee agreed to undertake the best practice site visits as outlined and noted that a further report exploring best practice visits in general would be submitted to the Committee through the Members' Development Steering Group in due course.

Live Streaming of Council Meetings

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details in response to an article and editorial comment which had appeared recently in the local media and which criticised the webcasting of Council meetings.

**Documentary on Lord Mayor –
Request to Film Council Meeting**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th November, it had granted authority for a film company, Waddell Media, to record the proceedings of the December, 2011 Council meeting as part of a documentary which had been produced on behalf of the British Broadcasting Company on the Lord Mayor's year in office. The company had now requested to film also the March, 2012 Council meeting in order to give a rounded picture of the duties of the Lord Mayor. It was understood that the company would require two personnel to be in attendance to carry out the filming. One camera would be used, operating from both a fixed and non-fixed positions.

It was reported that the Council had agreed to similar requests in the past and the filming of the proceedings of the Council meeting would not cause any disruptions to the proceedings and staff from the Corporate Communications Section would liaise directly with the production team to make them aware of the rules and protocols to be observed.

The Committee acceded to the request.

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations 2012 – Washington DC

The Director of Development reminded the Members of the significant political lobbying activity which took place during the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Washington DC. Over the years, that event had been used as an opportunity by the political establishment and business community to influence political support for the peace process and to promote the island of Ireland as a profitable investment location for United States businesses. During recent years, the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington had been very active in working with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in ensuring that Northern Ireland was given visibility at the events which took place in Washington at that time. The First and Deputy First Ministers, along with Executive Ministers, were regular attendees at the White House reception and other events in the United States capital at that time.

He reported that the Northern Ireland Bureau was currently finalising arrangements for a business breakfast to be held on Tuesday, 20th March, 2012 at which the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister would be presenting the Northern Ireland business proposition to business leaders from across the United States. The theme of the breakfast would be Northern Ireland 2012 and the tourism industry and focus would be given to Belfast's tourism offer and in particular the opening of Titanic Belfast and the wider Titanic events programme. The Director of Development had been contacted by the Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau to suggest that, given the level of coverage which Belfast and the Titanic-related events were likely to be

given at the Bureau's Breakfast Briefing and a range of other events, it would be appropriate for the Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Development Committee to travel to Washington DC to participate in the Breakfast Briefing. Should the Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Development Committee be granted approval to attend the Breakfast Briefing, the Northern Ireland Bureau would seek to ensure that they received also invitations to other events where there would be further opportunities to promote the City as an investment and tourism destination. Those included:

- The American Ireland Fund Dinner, Monday, 19th March, 2012
- Speaker's Lunch, Tuesday, 20th March, 2012
- Irish Ambassador's Reception, Tuesday, 20th March, 2012

The White House reception, which was hosted by President Obama, also took place on Tuesday, 20th March. Invitations to that event were issued by the State Department. The Acting Consul General, Mr. Kevin Roland, had indicated that he would seek invitations for the Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Development Committee should they be attending the Northern Ireland Bureau Breakfast Briefing. In addition, the American Consulate would be willing to arrange meetings in New York with investors in Belfast, such as the New York Stock Exchange, as part of the visit programme.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approve the attendance of the Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Development Committee at the Northern Ireland Bureau Breakfast Briefing and other associated events in Washington DC and to visit investors in New York City before returning to Belfast and that they be accompanied by the Director of Development (or his nominee). The cost of the visit was not likely to exceed £5,000 and would be met from existing budgetary provision.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Notes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders Forum

The Committee noted the details of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders Forum which had been held on 16th December.

Request for the Use of the Council Chamber

The Committee was advised that the Chairman (Councillor Hargey) had received a request from the Principal of Colaiste Feirste, a post-primary Irish-medium school in Belfast, for the use of the Council Chamber in order to hold a debate in Irish for pupils during Seachtain na Gaeilge, the annual Irish Language promotional week, which ran from 5th till 16th March. The school had indicated that the use of the Council Chamber and its facilities would add to the learning opportunity of public speaking for their pupils. Pupils of other schools might also be involved in the event.

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that the Council had granted the use of the Council Chamber for similar events in the past, including for Colaiste Feirste, and if such authority were to be granted, it would be normal practice to provide some limited hospitality in the form of soft drinks, tea, coffee and biscuits and he recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

2012 Somme Pilgrimage

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Somme Association enquiring if the Council would wish to be represented on the 2012 Pilgrimage to the Somme, France from 28th June until 2nd July, 2012. The Somme Pilgrimage, to mark the 96th anniversary of the battle, would follow the route taken by both the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions during their service in the First World War. Services of commemoration would be held in both Thiepval and Guillemont, in addition to attendance at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres.

In previous years the Committee had authorised the attendance on the Somme tour of a representative of each of the Political Parties on the Council. Members who had attended had found the event to be informative and worthwhile in that several of the ceremonial occasions were attended by many other dignitaries and officials, which afforded an opportunity for contacts to be made and relations to be developed on a range of topics and for the profile and image of Belfast to be promoted. The cost per person of attendance was approximately £700 plus the appropriate subsistence allowance, provision for which had been made within the Revenue Estimates.

The Committee approved the attendance on the tour of a representative of each of the Political Parties on the Council and the Chief Executive (or his nominee).

Human Resources

Appointment to the Post of Head of Contracts

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd September, it had approved the recruitment process for the appointment of the post of Head of Contracts. It was reported that, in accordance with the authority delegated to him, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the selection panel, had approved the appointment of Mr. Donal Rogan on the appropriate point of the Chief Officers' Salary Band.

Noted.

Standing Order 55 - Employment of Relatives

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Order 55 and the authority delegated to him, the Director of Finance and Resources had authorised the appointment of members of staff who were related to existing officers of the Council.

Noted.

Girdwood Community Hub - Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant background information

1.1 Members were informed at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee meeting in 18th November that the SEUPB Priority 2.1 Steering Committee has recommended the Girdwood Community Hub project for funding and that it had been forwarded it to the two governments' accountable departments for approval.

1.2 Council Officers met with SEUPB to seek further information on the letter and potential conditions of offer. The Director of Property and Projects updated Committee on a number of other issues which had been highlighted by SEUPB including -

Until the formal letter of offer is issued, the Council and its partners incur any expenditure at risk;

The Priority 2.1 Steering Committee were very positive about catalytic potential of the Hub and commended the Council and its partners for the significant work which had been undertaken to address the issues highlighted in the original economic appraisal however there were still a number of considerable risks on the implementation of the Hub;

Offer of funding is subject to proven capacity to implement within the tight timeframe;

Project has been forwarded to DSD economists which can take 12 months and then still needs to go to DFP after this. They will identify conditions of offer, related to risks identified;

Under SEUPB guidelines, the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) normally act as advisers on the procurement, design and construction of capital projects;

SEUPB concluded by highlighting that the Priority 2.1 Steering Committee need further assurance by June 2012 on the risks identified:

- a) implementation plan for wider site
- b) ensuring consolidation of community and public buy-in
- c) securing planning permission
- d) securing SLA's with partners.

It was also highlighted that there are other projects pending if the Hub is deemed unrealistic by the June deadline. SEUPB also asked that no public announcements or press releases are about the project without the prior approval of SEUPB.

- 1.3 At the Committee meeting on 18th November, the Director of Property & Projects brought to Members attention that SEUPB guidelines require the use of the CPD. He highlighted that given the nature of the project and the need for community involvement, he did not believe that this would be the best course and the Council should act in this role given the unique nature of this project and the Council's proven track record of delivering major capital projects. The Committee endorsed this approach and it was agreed that the Director of Property meet with SEUPB and CPD to outline this. It was further agreed that an update report would be brought back to Committee in due course.

2. Key issues to be addressed

2.1 Use of Central Procurement Directorate (CPD)

Following guidance from Members, Council officers met with SEUPB and CPD in mid December. During this meeting the adviser from CPD outlined their role in providing procurement advice to SEUPB. (See Appendix 2). The Director of Property and Projects outlined SP&R Committee's position on CPD. SEUPB recommended writing to them on this matter and they would seek the appropriate authority to deviate from their policy position.

2.2 Project Issues to be addressed by June 2012

As Members are aware the timeframe for the delivery of the Hub project is extremely tight as all monies have to be committed and spent by 2015. In order to meet this timeframe it will be necessary for the Council to work at 'risk' over the coming months until, and if, a formal letter of offer is received. Subject to agreement by SP&R Committee and their authority to proceed at risk, the issues to be addressed by June 2012 in order to ensure that the Hub progresses include –

Implementation plan for wider site

This is a key consideration for the departmental economists who are keen to ensure that the Hub is developed in the context of a vibrant site and a recent meeting was held with the North Belfast Member for Parliament and Assembly Members to discuss this matter. It was agreed that the Director of Property and Projects would meet with DSD and OFMDFM representatives by the end of the month and provide a map showing latest thinking on use allocation for political consideration in February.

Ensuring consolidation of community and public buy-in

At a meeting with the interim Hub Forum in December (community and statutory partners), the Director of Property and Projects outlined the issues above, including the risks involved. There is a commitment by the Forum to continue and increase public engagement, particularly in relation to the design of the building and its programmes. The Forum has agreed to meet over the next few weeks (18 Jan and 2 Feb) with an external facilitator to plan for the next stage of community engagement, widening community support for the project and involving local people in the design and programming of the Hub.

Securing planning permission

DSD officials are carrying out an analysis of the infrastructure required for the Hub. This report will be completed shortly. Further discussions are ongoing in relation to the precise location for the Hub. To meet the tight funding deadlines, it is anticipated that the Council would submit a planning application for the Hub in July 2012. The timeline for a decision on this is dependent on the Planning Service and speedy engagement with statutory consultees, such as DRD Roads Service. Following the meeting with the North Belfast politicians it was agreed to address the infrastructure investment at the meeting with DSD officials.

Securing Service Level Agreements with partners

Initial commitment to the Hub has been provided by Belfast Metropolitan College, the Prince's Trust and Police Service Northern Ireland. While they are all supportive of the Hub and believe that locating their programmes in the Hub would be beneficial to their objectives, there is a limit to how far we can proceed with legally-binding Service Level Agreements, prior to confirmation of the design of the building and the community engagement process. However, Council will work to develop Heads of Agreement documents with these 3 partners in advance of June 2012.

2.3 Critical Path – Next steps

A critical path for the design, build and completion of the Hub is attached at Appendix 4 for the information of Members. The key steps over the coming months up to June 2012 include the procurement of a design consultant. This would however be at risk to the Council in advance of the letter of offer from SEUPB.

3.0 Decisions required

Members are asked to note –

- the key issues and risks which have been identified in relation to the Hub project and that the Council has been requested to provide further assurance on these to SEUPB by June 2012 –
- agree that the Council proceeds at risk now in order to address the issues raised by SEUPB and to meet the tight timeframes involved
- that there will be ongoing political and community engagement re the Hub project.

4.0 Resource Implications

Human

Officers from the relevant Council departments will work with the Department for Social Development to implement a realistic project plan and with the Hub Forum on a community engagement process.

Financial

All expenditure for the project, as outlined in the application, must be claimed from SEUPB by mid-2015. The costs for the design consultant could be in the region of £250,000. It is anticipated that community engagement costs will be in the region of £15,000.

Assets

Property and Projects Department, in liaison with other departments, will oversee the land acquisition issues and construction programme and seek the appropriate approvals from Committee in due course.

5.0 Equality Implications

The Committee previously approved the Equality Strategy for the Girdwood Community Hub. It outlines how the Council will fulfil its equality obligations during the development of the Girdwood Community Hub and the Hub's likely impact and outcomes in terms of equality and good relations."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Lagan Canal - Ministerial Visit

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th November, it had agreed that an All-Party Group should accept an offer to meet with the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding the potential support for a Lagan Canal Project. The meeting had taken place on 21st November and had been attended by Alderman Rodgers, Councillor Ó Muilleoir and Councillor Mullan, accompanied by Council officers.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the Members had outlined the background to the project, the context of All Island Waterways Network, the work undertaken to date by the Council and the Council's relationship with Ulster Garden Villages, which was a keen supporter of the Lagan Canal concept. The Members then expanded on the various benefits of the project, including tourism, links to maritime history, leisure, community cohesion, enhanced open space and opportunities for sport, physical activity and ensuring health benefits.

The Minister had accepted and endorsed those benefits and was particularly keen on the possibilities for increasing the participation of working class communities in river and riverside activities. However, the Minister did point out that her Department had no spare budgetary capacity during the current Comprehensive Spending Review period and that the priority for the Department was the development of new Stadia over the next few years. She did not rule out future funding if the project was sufficiently developed. The Minister did see merit in involving both the Department for Social Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in discussion on

the project as it impacted on areas within those departments' remits and agreed to raise the issue with ministerial colleagues. Furthermore, she also undertook to write to Sports NI seeking advice on how it might increase river and towpath participation in working class communities and also to ask the Strategic Investment Board for its views on the project and possible funding options.

The Members of the delegation had responded by providing some further detail on the broader range of physical projects which had been identified in the draft Stimulus Package and explained also that the Council's economic appraisal for the project was being refreshed as part of an overall business case looking at the whole of the river from the harbour to Lough Neagh. The Members had also accepted that money would not be immediately available but were encouraged by the Minister's idea of broadening support to include other Departments. The Members also suggested it might be helpful to arrange through the Lord Mayor an event for all interested parties to look at ways forward. The Minister had welcomed the meeting and suggested further communication with the Council in terms of a more joined up approach to capital projects and more frequent meetings between the Council and the Department.

Councillor Ó Muilleoir had indicated that the Minister for Social Development had agreed to meet with him to discuss the project and had offered to open the meeting to include representatives from the other Political Parties on the Council and he sought the Committee's view in this regard.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) seek the Lord Mayor's support for an event for all interested parties in relation to the project;
- (ii) continue an increased communication with the Department in regard to capital projects and to follow up with other Departments in regard to the Lagan Canal Project; and
- (iii) to accept a similar invitation for an All-Party deputation to meet with Nelson McCausland, Minister for Social Development.

Connswater Community Greenway – Update on Contract

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the contract associated with the Connswater Community Greenway and affirmed its decision to grant authority to the Director of Property and Projects, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Town Solicitor, to pursue the most advantageous option to ensure value-for-money and expeditious completion of the project to the acquired design standards and also to follow up with the Connswater Joint Venture the issue of an independent review of cost and value.

**Connswater Community Greenway –
Land Acquisition**

The Committee was reminded that, as part of the City Investment Strategy, it had agreed to co-ordinate the acquisition of lands to allow the Connswater Community Greenway to proceed. It was reported that the following areas of land had been identified as being required to complete the Greenway route and associated landscaping which officers had agreed to purchase, subject the Committee's approval:

- An area of land adjacent to Village Green, off Ladas Drive consisting of 0.178 acres from Cregagh Sports Club in the sum of £2,670; and
- An area of land at Upper Knockbreda Road which was owned by the Department for Regional Development, Roads Service and, while the Department could not dispose of the land on a permanent basis, it had agreed to grant the Council a Licence at nil cost to allow the Connswater Community Greenway contractor to landscape the area.

The Committee granted approval for the purchase of the land and to the obtaining of a licence as outlined.

**North Foreshore - Proposed licence to Seating
and Access Contractors Limited**

The Committee was reminded that, in recent years, the Belfast City Marathon route had ran along Dargan Crescent, across Dargan Road and onto the cycle track on the northern shore of Belfast Lough. Runners were required to cross a busy dual carriageway linking the Port to the M2 Motorway which, due to increased port traffic, had presented an obstacle and a safety hazard for the runners.

The Director of Property and Projects reported that the solution to the problem was the installation of a temporary foot bridge over Dargan Road to be erected by a contractor appointed by Belfast City Marathon Limited, the event management company. To facilitate material storage and bridge construction, Belfast City Marathon Limited had requested the temporary use of a stoned site fronting Dargan Road in the North Foreshore Giants Park. The Marathon Company had appointed Seating and Access Contractors Limited to erect the temporary foot bridge and had requested the Council to grant a licence to the contractors on the site from 3rd until 8th May, 2012 inclusive. The site would be used for plant and material storage purposes only. The licensee would erect temporary fencing and site access would be via the existing internal road network. Security would be provided by the licensee.

Accordingly, it was recommended that a licence be granted to Seating Access Contractors Limited on a site at the North Foreshore for use in connection with the construction of a temporary foot bridge over Dargan Road from 3rd until 8th May, 2012 at a nominal fee of £1.00, with the licensee providing all necessary insurance cover and indemnifying the Council against any claim arising out of its use and occupation of the site.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Rent Reviews – Smithfield Car Park and
St. George’s Market Retail Units**

The Committee noted the contents of a report and granted approval to:

- (i) a revised Licence fee payable to the Department for Regional Development, Roads Service for the Smithfield Car Park for the year commencing 1st December, 2009 at £65,000 p.a. and for December, 2010 at £64,500 p.a.;
- (ii) to retain the rents for Unit 1, Unit 2 and the 1st floor Restaurant at St. George’s Market at the existing levels until the date of the next rent review.

**Belmont Car Park Rent Review –
The Church of Ireland Young Men’s Society**

The Committee was advised that the former Client Services (Parks and Amenities) had on 22 August, 1995 agreed to lease a 0.884 acre site to the Church of Ireland Young Men’s Society for use as a car park. The site had previously been used unofficially for parking by members of the Society and the public. The extent of the site leased to the Society was located adjacent to Belmont Park and was for a period of 50 years, subject to 5 yearly rent reviews. The rent payable fell due for review on 1st November, 2010.

The Committee was advised that the current Lease restricted the use of land to a car park for use of the members of the Society and permitted visitors in connection with the occupation and use of the Society’s adjoining lands. The Church of Ireland Young Men’s Society must also provide access and permit parking on the land by members of the public using the adjoining Belmont Park. After negotiation with an agent acting for the Society, a revised rent of £2,900 had been provisionally agreed, subject to Committee approval. The revised amount was for the period from 1st November, 2010 until 31st October, 2015 and had been increased to a level similar to other recent comparable lettings. It also reflected the restricted user clause and the fact that the car park had shared use with members of the public.

The Committee approved the revised rent review

Construction Contracts - Social Clauses

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 **Members have previously asked officers to consider the issue of how social clauses in procurement might be used to provide opportunities to local firms and those not in employment.**

Key Issues

- 2.1 Procurement and employment laws mean that the Council cannot limit contract awards to Belfast or local firms, require contractors to use Belfast or local suppliers or sub-contractors or require local people to be employed by contractors or sub-contractors. However, there are several initiatives which might be applicable:
- 2.2 Construction Sales Growth Programme: This initiative, which is already running, is funded by the Council, through the Economic Development Unit, and the European Regional Development Fund's European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland. It is aimed at small Belfast-based firms in the construction and allied business sector who want to identify, target and exploit supply chain opportunities with the major building contractors delivering large-scale construction and regeneration projects.
- 2.3 Social Clause Delivery Forum: Central government includes requirements for construction contractors to provide employment opportunities through the DEL Steps to Work Programme (targeted at the unemployed and economically inactive) and to employ a specified level (5%) of their own, and their sub-contractors', workforce on formally recognised paid apprenticeships. These requirements are pro-rata the value of labour content in a contract; however, the scale of the Council's contracts is generally less than those of central government and therefore the application of this requirement might need to be adjusted accordingly. DEL advise that this initiative would be monitored by them on our behalf.
- 2.4 Local publicity: The Project Management Unit, supported by the Economic Development Unit, could provide information in the locality of major construction projects to publicise potential supply chain opportunities. This would include clarification of the scale and nature of upcoming opportunities, providing opportunities for building consortium bids and advice on issues to consider when tendering.
- 2.5 Tender/Contract Alert: Notifications of future tenders and the award of contracts are currently published on the Council's tender website to alert contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers of potential business opportunities.

Resource Implications

- 3.1 It is not expected that the implementation of these initiatives would have any significant impact on the budgets for the Council's construction contracts.
- 3.2 The Construction Sales Growth programme is being managed by Economic Development Unit and funded by EU and existing Council resources.
- 3.3 The Steps to Work Programme and the Apprenticeship Scheme are funded by DEL.
- 2.4 The Social Clause Delivery initiative would be monitored by DEL on our behalf.

Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the implementation of the above initiatives on relevant construction contracts as a pilot scheme over the next 12 months.

Decision Tracking

- 5.1 A report on the implementation and effectiveness of these initiatives will be presented at the end of the pilot period.

Key to Abbreviations

DEL: Department of Employment and Learning"

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that the discussions be undertaken with the Human Resources Section to align the project with the Programme-led Apprenticeship Schemes and noted that a further report in relation to the timeline for the introduction of the legislation allowing local authorities to include social clauses in contracts would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Good Relations and Equality

(Mrs. H. Francey, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with these items).

Minutes of Meeting of Good Relations Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the Minutes of the Good Relations Partnership and adopted the recommendations in respect of the following:

Revised Equality Action Plan

The decision of the Partnership to approve the revised Equality Scheme and revised Interim Equality Action Plan and proposed responses to consultation comments.

Irish Language Event - City Hall

To the decision of the partnership regarding the hosting of an Irish language event in the City Hall on 31st January at a cost of £6,000, 75% of which would be recouped from the office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Proposed Centenary Event - Request for Assistance

To approve financial assistance to the Reverend Wilfred Orr, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church to enable the staging of a play at Aquinas Grammar School on Wednesday 15th March, which would portray prominent characters and reflect historical opinions prevalent at the time of the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant in September, 1912. The costs of which would be £1,000, 75% of which would be recouped from the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Good Relations Unit – Staff Development Event

The approval by the Partnership to the hosting, at the Corrymeela Centre, of a staff development event for the Good Relations Unit.

Minutes of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group of 15th January and adopted the recommendations in respect of the following:

Work Plan

An extract of the minute of the Group in relation to the Work Plan is set out hereunder:

“The Working Group considered the undernoted report concerning the development of a Work Plan for the Council Diversity Strategy:

‘1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that SP&R Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2011 agreed:

“that the Party Group leaders meet with the Centenaries Working Group over a defined period of time, as set out (in the report), to explore the possibility of developing a Council strategy on diversity and agree that the Chief Executive’s office liaise with Members to agree a timetable of meetings to be tabled at the first joint meeting of the Historic Centenaries Group.”

1.2 The Committee noted a range of issues relating to cultural diversity on which the Council will have to make decisions in the near future:

- memorabilia and displays in and around the City Hall***
- Flying of the Union Flag EQIA***
- the Decade of Centenaries programme, events, cultural displays in Council public facilities***
- use of the Irish language***
- Use of the Ulster-Scots language***
- Use of minority ethnic languages***
- How the Council deals with homecoming parades***
- Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations***
- and expressions of distinctiveness within local areas and neighbourhoods (i.e. including public art, signage and symbolism).***

1.3 At the first meeting of the Joint Group, given that the Unionist Members had earlier withdrawn from the meeting, the Joint Group decided not to take any decisions in relation to the process for developing a Council Diversity Strategy and requested that the Chief Executive arrange for the next meeting of the Joint Group to focus on the establishment of a key set of principles in relation to the Diversity Strategy and that, in order to assist the Group in its discussions, the meeting be facilitated by Mr. Duncan Morrow from the Community Relations Council.

2.0 Key Issues

2.1 *The purpose of this process is to develop a council strategy on diversity which would allow Council to approach all of the issues (listed at 1.2) in a consistent, fair and open manner.*

2.2 *It is proposed that the aim of the Joint Group is:*

To develop and agree an overarching framework of principles as the basis for developing a Council 'Managing Diversity' strategy (working title).

The Joint Group will report, at the appropriate times to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2.3 *It is proposed that the Joint Group seeks to expand the principles already agreed by the Historic Centenaries Working Group and approved by SP&R Committee (Appendix 1), and their application to each of the issues listed above. This would enable the Council to develop an overarching framework of principles which, in turn, allows decisions to be made in a consistent, fair and open manner.*

Following agreement on any enhancement to the current principles, consideration would need to be given to the political and organisational implications e.g. securing formal Council agreement; resources; staff training; policy development.

2.4 *In order to facilitate this discussion, it is suggested that Members may wish to prioritise the issues listed at 1.2. This would be for a number of reasons:*

- *It will enable the Joint Group to systematically test the principles already agreed (Appendix 1) and their practical application in relation to the issues listed at 1.2;***
- *There are a number of applications seeking use of Council facilities during 2012, for which external organisations need appropriate notice e.g. Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland; Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Joint Group will have to consider the applications in the context of the strategy development and provide timely advice to the relevant Committees;***

- *Members may request research papers to be compiled (internally and/or externally) for consideration e.g. expressions of distinctiveness within neighbourhoods, which will require preparation time;*
- *Some Members have already received a briefing on the City Hall Displays draft EQIA (arrangements need to be made to brief other parties, as requested) and it may be necessary to timetable a similar presentation on the Flying of the Union Flag draft EQIA;*
- *Draft policy positions will require a time-line to include public consultation, in line with the Council's Equality Scheme obligations.*

It is proposed that Members identify the most pressing issues for early discussion and officers will prepare an ongoing work plan for the next 2 months.

2.5 *At meetings of the Historic Centenaries Working Group, there is a common agreement that items will only be forwarded to the formal Committee system when there is cross-party consensus or an agreement to formally consider a range of options. The Joint Group might consider adopting a similar approach. Members also need to be confident that opinions expressed in the meetings will be treated under Chatham House rules.*

3.0 *Resource Implications*

Human: *None at present.*

Financial: *Costs for external facilitation will be covered within existing revenue budgets.*

Assets: *None at present.*

4.0 *Equality Implications*

Any strategy would have to ensure compliance with existing legal requirements and Equality Commission guidelines and should aim to promote better community relations within the Council and the city.

5.0 Decisions required

- 1. To agree a prioritised list of issues for discussion**
- 2. To agree the principle of consensus and Chatham House rules for the meetings**

6.0 Officers to contact

**Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager (Ext. 6020);
Caroline Wilson, Project Officer (Ext. 3399)**

7.0 Appendix

Principles that might be used in selection of events to be marked in Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022 agreed by Centenaries Working Group 17th October, 2011 and by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee 21st October, 2011

Appendix

Principles that might be used in selection of events to be marked in the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022

(Agreed by Centenaries Working Group 17 October 2011 and by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee 21 October 2011)

The decade in question marks a number of particularly significant dates that have shaped the history of Northern Ireland and Ireland and therefore our own identities and cultures – see list previously circulated.

The marking of these events provides the Council with an excellent opportunity to broaden our understanding of the past and our respect for the complexity of our shared history.

As a shared city in the twenty-first century, we should be able to deal with difference in a positive and constructive manner, demonstrating openness on the basis of shared civic values within a democracy and a mature respect for cultural diversity within our heritage.

- ***Events supported by the Council should provide opportunities to include a range of different perspectives and ideologies, rather than a single viewpoint, aiming to increase understanding and appreciation of other perspectives and identities***
- ***They should be based on historic accuracy, robust academic expertise and critical analysis – engagement with universities, museums, libraries, PRONI etc is essential to ensure this evidence base***
- ***The interpretation of events should be in a broad historical context and understanding of the national and European setting of the time***
- ***The Council should develop strong links with other institutions – i.e. museums, libraries, PRONI and other relevant organisations, to ensure that there is no duplication and that events and programmes are complementary***
- ***We will provide/support a range of different types of events – from lectures, discussions, debates to films, drama, activities that attract schools and children/families etc – so that events can not only be educational but participative, creative and enjoyable***
- ***We will provide/support events and activities that are not exclusive¹ but are welcoming to all sections of our increasingly diverse community in Belfast***

This set of principles, if agreed, should be applied corporately to any key anniversaries being marked by the Council.”

The Chief Executive reminded the Members of the principles which had been established by the Centenaries Working Group when considering the selection of events to be marked during the period from 2012 to 2022 and suggested that these would be a good starting point for the Working Group in considering the establishment of its own principles in relation to the development of a Council Diversity Policy.

¹ The Council, committed both to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in the City, will not support events or activities that could be deemed to be triumphalist, to deepen or harden existing divisions, or belittle or demonise other groups.
(Adapted from the Irish School of Ecumenics, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism* research)

Dr. Morrow stated that his role on the Working Group was to facilitate a wide-ranging discussion and to assist the Members to examine whether there was a way in which a Council Diversity Policy could be agreed amongst the various Political Parties. In order to assist with this discussion, he suggested that it would be useful for the Members of the Working Group to indicate what they hoped to achieve in relation to the discussions; to establish a set of principles that would guide the work of the Group and to agree rules to inform the debate and the reporting of proceedings so as to assist the Group towards its overall aim of establishing a Diversity Policy.

The Members of the Working Group each stated their expectations of the Work Programme and what they hoped to achieve at the end of the process.

Noted.”

Priorities for Consideration by the Working Group

The Committee approved the decision of the Working Group to prioritise the following matters in its Work Plan:

- the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- the Equality Impact Assessment on the flying of the Union flag
- the Equality Impact Assessment on displays in the City Hall
- an update report on the celebration of the Decade of Centenaries
- a report on a suitable means for the Council to mark the ending of “Operation Banner”

Cross-Cutting Issues

(Mr. D. Connolly, Environmental Health Manager, attended in connection with these items.)

New Dynamics of Learning and Ageing Conference

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Northern Ireland, like many other European Countries, has an increasing number of older people. The demographic structure has changed from a population largely under 50 to one where people over 50 account for around a third of the population and where it is estimated that people over 60 will outnumber people under 16 within the next few years.

- 1.2 In Belfast, 19.65% of the population is over 60. With life expectancy rising dramatically in the last 50 years, annual improvements in survival rates and falling levels of fertility it is estimated that by 2030 25% of people in Belfast will be over 65 years of age. As a City we must address this and be prepared for an increasingly ageing society and plan for how this will affect our City economically, socially and culturally e.g. the number of retired people will increase and therefore tax payers decrease; the costs of pensions, benefits and health care will also increase significantly.
 - 1.3 The 'GIVE' (Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors) is a European initiative which was introduced in 2009. It consists of a scheme of grants to support senior volunteering projects between local organisations located in two countries participating in the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).
 - 1.4 The initiative is a new form of co-operation within the Grundtvig Programme, fostering collaboration between the organisations sending and hosting volunteers. It allows organisations which join the programme to enrich their work through the exchange of good practice and create sustainable European collaboration between them.
- 2 **Key Issues**
- 2.1 Belfast and Madrid were successful as partners in applying for this European funding and are currently over half way through the exchange programme (8 of the 12 volunteers have been on an exchange).
 - 2.2 The project objectives include the development of lifelong skills, enabling local communities to draw on the potential of senior citizens as a source of knowledge, competence and experience, to learn other cultures and to build the volunteer's confidence and self belief.
 - 2.3 An abstract of the Grundtvig project was submitted to the conference call for papers and was accepted by the panel. It is anticipated that the abstract will be presented by an elected member and one of the senior volunteers who have travelled on the exchange. An officer will also attend to support the elected member and older person.
 - 2.4 The conference will aim to:

- Identify new areas of teaching and learning, especially through arts and creativity
- Share good practice about older adults' learning and educational opportunities
- Include the voice of the older learner
- Highlight the EU year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity (2012)
- Showcase the work of the conference partners and other contributors

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

The cost for attending the 3 day conference in Dublin including delegate fees, travel and accommodation is approximately €400 per delegate. Alternatively, a day rate is also available which will cost €150 per delegate. Costs for the attendance for the councillor and older volunteer will come from the EU supported Grundtvig project. If an officer attends it will be funded via the revenue estimates.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is asked to agree that

- 1. the chair of the All Party Reference Group on Older People (or her nominee) speaks at the conference**
- 2. an older volunteer speaks at the conference**
- 3. A Council officer attends the conference to support the Elected Representative and the older volunteer**

Key to Abbreviations

LLP – Life Long Learning programme
EU – European Union”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Proposal from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust –
Member Information Clinics**

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust was one of the largest in Western Europe. Not only did it have three major hospitals located within the City, it was also responsible for a larger number of local health centres, some of which were health and well-being centres, community based health services, social services, children in care and older people's services (including nine residential homes). The Trust also commissioned a wide range of services in local areas and had taken an increasing role in prevention over recent years.

The vast majority of residents in Belfast accessed the Trust's services, many on a regular basis. The Trust had a number of mechanisms for engaging with its users, including a Personal and Public Involvement Programme. There was also a regional Patient and Client Council, which aimed to glean the views of users and ensure that they were brought to the attention of the Trusts.

The Environmental Health Manager pointed out that there had been, and would continue to be, significant changes to health services in Belfast and the Committee had recently received presentations on changes to acute service provision, to Accident and Emergency provision and that the Compton Review would bring further reform. He reported that the Trust wished to have an ongoing relation with the Council and specifically with the Elected Members. In addition to presentations to Committees on major changes to services, it wished to be more accessible to Members, particularly in dealing with constituency issues.

Therefore, to improve accessibility for Members to the Trust in respect of constituency issues, the Trust had proposed that it set up a dedicated "Member Information Clinic" with the Council once a month. In this regard, the Trust had requested permission to use a room in the City Hall to provide those clinics and would use their Public Affairs staff. It was intended to plan those clinics around the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting dates and to operate them on a trial basis for two to three months.

The Committee agreed that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust be granted use of a room in the City Hall to provide a "Member Information Clinic" on a trial basis.

Chairman